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Seattle, Wash., 25th. Jany., 1908.

Mr. J. M. Frink,

President, Board of Park Commissioners,

Seattle, Washington.

Dear Sir:-

In accordance with the resolution passed by the Board of Park Commissioners, November 14th., 1907, we have examined the recently annexed districts and have conferred with prominent business men residing in those districts and with the Park Commissioners, the Park Superintendent, the City Engineer and others, and have studied many subdivision and topographical maps of these sections. We have also, in accordance with your letter of instructions dated December 12th., 1907, examined Magnolia Bluffs and maps of same.

We beg leave to submit our report embodying our recommendations as to a comprehensive system of parks and parkways for the recently annexed districts similar in general scope and character to the system of parks and parkways recommended for Seattle in our report adopted by the City Council, October 19th., 1903.

Before describing in detail our recommendations as to parks to be acquired in the recently annexed districts of the city, it will be well to define the purposes of parks and parkways, and the character of the different classes of parks, their



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desirable sizes, locations and natural features.

The first class includes smallest parks, such as Pioneer Park, which are so small as to make it inadvisable to cut them up even by walks. Their main function is to afford a certain spaciousness to the locality in which they occur and at the same time to give pleasure by their beauty of a landscape gardening sort, or even of a purely architectural kind, or both.

The second class includes ornamental squares or small parks in which the element of beauty is the controlling consideration but in which by means of walks and settees the public is enabled in passing, or by resting on the settees to enjoy a fair amount of landscape beauty amidst city buildings and streets.

The third class includes small playgrounds in which provision for the little folks to actively play is the prime consideration and in which landscape beauty is obviously subordinated to that purpose.

The fourth class includes playfields of such size that boys of the grammar school age can be permitted to play ball on them without undue danger to passers-by and with little annoyance to the occupants of neighboring houses. There may be, and usually should be, a border or portions of such a playfield set aside and improved to secure some degree of landscape beauty for the enjoyment of those who are not playing on the field.

The fifth class includes small parks in which landscape beauty is the prime consideration, although some provision may also be made within the park, in such a way as not to unduly



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detract from its main purpose, for playgrounds for little folks, for one or more ball fields and for other recreative uses. Such parks are not large enough to enable their natural landscape beauty to be enjoyed to the best advantage and without more or less interference by city sights and sounds, but they are exceedingly valuable as an important means of making the lives of the people of the neighborhood better worth living.

The sixth class of parks are those in which a considerable body of natural landscape is preserved or more or less created by man with the aid of nature. The essential condition of this class of parks is that the markedly artificial conditions of city life should be kept out of sight and that only necessary artificialities should be permitted. It is in this class of parks that the remarkable topographical and scenic advantages of Seattle should be taken advantage of, not only to enable visitors in the park to enjoy the beautiful views amid agreeable surroundings and with picturesque foregrounds, but because a tract of land at a given cost, or having a certain area is worth far

more for the fundamental purpose for which the land is to be bought, than an equal area of land at the same cost but situated where houses and streets on all sides will eventually cut off all views of distant landscape.

We have not undertaken to indicate locations for parks of the first class. If their desirability is kept in mind, they will come into existence as the result of street planning and by gift of land owners, or through purchase by subscription



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of interested land owners and residents. The Board of Park Commissioners may very properly accept such gifts and undertake their care. The Park Commission of Buffalo, for instance has charge of twenty-six triangles at junctions of streets. We are not informed, but we believe not a single one was purchased with park funds.

We are not proposing to designate locations for parks of the second class, commonly called squares, because they are not so immediately necessary to be acquired, because they are of particular value to the surrounding property and the initial steps for their acquirement may therefore safely be left to the people, who can at any time express their wishes by means of a petition. The matter is, however, an important one and it is to be hoped that local improvement societies will give due attention to this obvious means of beautifying the districts in which they are especially interested. It is interesting in this connection to know that Buffalo has twenty-seven such minor places with an aggregate area of 74 acres.

We are not to designate locations for the third class of parks. Some little folks playgrounds could no doubt be located in the borders of the parks which we shall describe later, but where land is acquired primarily for little folks playgrounds, it is usually so limited in area that little if any of the space can be assigned for park treatment. In such cases it would be more appropriate for the School Board or the Charities Board of the city to acquire and manage them.



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The fourth class of parks, namely those in which a ballfield is the principal feature are mainly of local value but should be provided through action by the Park Board in order to insure a reasonably uniform distribution of them without regard to the demands of individuals. So important are these ballfield parks to the health and morality of the growing generation that if a complete system of parks cannot be accomplished all at once, the ballfield class should be among the first to receive attention. As a rule they should be about 20 acres and rarely less than about 7 or 8 acres in extent. This means at least two blocks of the size that prevails now in West Seattle and Ballard subdivisions, together with the intervening street. Prompt action should be taken because it is getting to be difficult to find two whole blocks together of level land conveniently located, without buildings, and in a short time many of the most suitable sites will have been built upon. For this reason it is wise to secure at this time, local parks with ballfields even in very sparsely built up districts. We have selected and shall later describe sites for ball-field parks, fairly well distributed, all over the recently annexed districts.

The parks of the fifth class, that is small parks in which beauty of landscape is more important than provisions for physical exercise, are very largely local in importance. They are of great value to residents within a reasonable distance,



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say 10 to 15 minutes walk, but of much less value to people living so far from them that the street car would ordinarily be used to reach them. Still, they differ very much between themselves as to their relative value to people of the neighborhood and to people living at a distance. This difference depends partly upon their accessibility, but mainly upon the attractiveness of their landscape features and especially upon their command of fine distant views, and association with extensive water. For instance, Denny Park is attractive mainly to the people of the neighborhood, while Kinnear Park is likewise attractive to people of all parts of the city, who will resort to it in inverse proportion to the inconvenience and time required to get to it. Hence, every park of this class should be located adjoining the shore of lake or sound so as to command the finest and most extensive views. Hardly any amount of imagination and skillful landscape gardening on an interior park can make up for the lack of these natural advantages. In some cases it has been possible to include enough level land in sites for parks of this class for a ball field but usually the nearly level land, if there is any, is already so built upon or so expensive that not enough level land has been included for a ball field. Moreover, it is obvious that a ball field in the centre of say a square mile of residences would be more conveniently located than one at the shore side of a square mile, so it is not important to incur much extra expense to include a ball field in a small view park if it can be located elsewhere within a half mile or a mile.



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We are not intending to select any park of the sixth class because the present report is based upon the idea of bringing the recently annexed districts up to somewhere near the amount of park area in proportion to the total area of each district that the parks of Seattle had to its area before these recent annexations. In fact, Seattle strictly speaking has no park of the sixth class. There is some question whether, considering the tremendous natural advantages of the Sound and the lakes, it will be necessary that the city should have anywhere within its present boundaries a park of this class, such for instance as Franklin Park in Boston, Prospect Park in Brooklyn or Delaware Park in Buffalo, that is to say, a park having an area in one compact body of 500 acres or more.

A boulevard may be defined as a formal street of sufficient width to include one or more formal grass strips (with formal planting) of more than usual width. For a street the width of 100 feet is, if not common, at least so frequently met with as to excite no comment. Therefore, the name boulevard can hardly be applied with propriety to a 100 foot street. Boulevards are usually 200 feet wide. They are almost without exception of uniform width for long distances and everywhere of formal design.

A parkway may be defined as an avenue or way in which there is an appreciable amount of informal natural landscape beauty. There is no definite width of street beyond which only can the name parkway be properly applied. The parkway is usually in effect two streets with a strip of informal landscape



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gardening or of natural scenery (such as a brook for instance) between them, or a street with a strip of informal landscape gardening along one side, or a street along the shore of lake, river or sea.

There are remarkable opportunities for parkways in the recently annexed districts south and southwest of the City, but only a brief opportunity in that northwest of the City.

Parkways combine, much more obviously than parks, value to the abutting property, value to the neighborhood and value to the city as a whole. Still they cost much more per acre than parks, both for land and construction, as a rule.

In order to have some criterion as to the extent of parks which would be reasonable, we have examined park reports and maps of some other cities which have already provided themselves with parks. The following table will give a sufficient idea of actual practice in this matter.

Ratio of area of parks to total area of certain cities.

| City        | : Area in | : Area of parks | : Percentage of total |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------|
|             | : acres   | : in acres #    | : area in parks.      |
|             | :         | :               | :                     |
| Albany      | : 7,120   | : 295           | : 4.15                |
| Cambridge   | : 4.155   | : 205 #         | : 4.91                |
| Hartford    | : 11,050  | : 1200          | : 10.85               |
| Kansas City | : 23,020  | : 2000          | : 8.68                |
| Louisville  | : 12,800  | : 1257          | : 9.90                |
| Rochester   | : 11,700  | : 871           | : 7.45                |
| Seattle     | : 18,031  | : 566           | : 3.25                |
|             | :         | :               | :                     |

# Including outlying parks and parkways.

# Including Metropolitan Park holdings in Cambridge.



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That is to say, not including outlying parks and parkways, a reasonable minimum allowance of local park area would be five per cent, or 32 acres in each mile square of city.

As to distribution, there should be local parks, especially for women with babies, and for playgrounds for young children, within a short walk, say half a mile, of every home, and there should be playfields for boys of the grammar school age and outdoor gymnasias for older boys within a mile of every home.

The recently annexed districts have joined the City practically without parks. The area of Seattle previous to the recent annexations was 18,031 acres. The city then possessed parks (over one acre in area) amounting to 566 acres or about  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent.

To put each of the recently annexed areas on a parity with Seattle in the matter of parks and without cost to Seattle, it is proposed to take lands for parks in each such district to the extent, as nearly as may be of  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent of its area and to assess the cost of these lands on special assessment districts limited to the recently annexed districts.

For the same reason of equity, no considerable part of the \$500,000 loan, which was placed before these annexations (no part of the interest and sinking fund of which is taxed on the recently annexed districts) should be spent in those districts.

Our immediate problem therefore is to select lands for parks to the extent of approximately  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent of each of the



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annexed districts, taking care that each such park shall be reasonably well located, shall be adapted either for a playfield or a landscape treatment, or that it shall command a fine view, or that it shall be a marked benefit to the locality by preserving a ravine or a bluff from such ugly uses as would be a detriment to surrounding property and that it shall cost as little for improvements as possible.

With these purposes in mind, we recommend for acquirement under the assessment plan the following parks:

| <u>Ballard.</u>                                                                                         | Acres. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Ballard Bluff Park:<br>W.of 32nd.Ave.N.W., from W.75th.St. to and including lot 11 in Loyal Heights. | 45     |
| 2. Parker Playfield:<br>Between 26th. and 28th.Aves. and 60th. and 62nd.Sts.                            | 6.8    |
| 3. Market Playfield:<br>Between 9th. and 11th.Aves. and W. 53rd. and Market Sts.                        | 4.6    |
| 4. Whitman Playfield:<br>Between 9th. and 12th. Aves. and 77th. and 83rd.Sts.                           | 15.25  |

Area of Ballard - 2300 acres of which area of proposed parks is, 3.1%

| <u>Ravenna.</u>                                                                                |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. Ravenna Park:<br>About 15 acres at the west end of Beck's Ravenna Park- next to Cowen Park. | 15.0 |

Area of Ravenna - 480 acres of which area of proposed parks is 3.2%



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| <u>West Seattle.</u>                                                                                                               | Acres. |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Pigeon Point Park:<br>Between 20th. and 21st.Aves.S.W. north of<br>White Brothers Subdivision.                                  | 1.5    |
| 2. Duwamish Head Park:<br>Between Sunset Road and the tide flats<br>and Rhode Island St.(extended) and<br>Mexico Place (extended). | 2.79   |
| 3. Alki Point Park:<br>Lot P. of K.Olsen's and lots 19 to 22 incl.<br>of Benson's Shore Acres.                                     | 9.4    |
| 4. Schmitz Dell Park:<br>Includes F.Schmidt's 40 acre tract and<br>Alki Point lots 65 and 66 and E.half of 7.                      | 52.5   |
| 5. West Seattle Playfield:<br>Between California and Walnut Aves. and<br>W.Lander and W. Stevens Sts.                              | 9.66   |
| Total - - - - -                                                                                                                    | 75.85  |

Area of assessment district, all N. of  
W. Alaska Ave. 2445 acres. Area of proposed parks equals 3.1%

| <u>South Park.</u>                                                             | Acres. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. South Park Playfield:<br>Lots 19 to 36 inclusive, of Excelsior Acre Tracts. | 18.    |
| Area of South Park, 529 acres of which area of proposed<br>park is 3.4%.       |        |

| <u>Southeast Seattle.</u>                                                                                   | Acres. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| East<br>Including South Seattle, Columbia,<br>Rainier Beach, &c.                                            |        |
| 1. York Playfield:<br>Between Rainier Boulevard and 36th.Ave.S.,<br>and Wetmore St.(extended) and Lilac St. | 24.9   |



| <u>Southeast Seattle-</u> continued.                                                                                                                                                                          | Acres. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 2. Headland Park:<br>Land 9 ac., water 40 ac., North of B. St.<br>and E. of 42nd. Ave.S.                                                                                                                      | 49.    |
| 3. Columbia Playfield:<br>Between Rainier Boulevard and 38th.Ave.S. and<br>Conover and Crawford Sts.                                                                                                          | 8.8    |
| 4. Bailey Peninsula Park:<br>Between proposed shore boulevard and<br>E. line of lot 23 in B.W.Johns and C.H.Hanford's<br>5 acre tracts and N. line of lot 25 in said tracts<br>and S.line of J.M.Sears lot 5. | 24.    |
| 5. Graham Ave.Playfield:<br>W. of Rainier Boulevard between Graham and<br>Woodland Aves.                                                                                                                      | 7.7    |
| 6. Dunlap Canyon Playfield:<br>W. from Renton Ave. to the middle of<br>Section 34 between Lake St.(extended) and<br>N. line of lot 10 Plat of Lake Dell.                                                      | 19.7   |
| 7. Addition to Atlantic City Park:<br>Between Lake View Boulevard and shore from<br>existing park to C.D.Hillman's Acreage Tract.                                                                             | 6.     |
| 8. Prichard Island:<br>About 100 yards E. of Atlantic City Park.                                                                                                                                              | 14.    |
| 9. Rainier Shore Park:<br>E. of Rainier Ave. between Davis Ave. and Avenue C.                                                                                                                                 | 2.75   |
| 10. Rainier Playfield:<br>S. of 5th. St. opposite Block 51 in<br>Rainier Beach Tract.                                                                                                                         | 2.16   |
| 11. South Ridge Playfield:<br>W. of Pipe Line and S. of Myrtle St.                                                                                                                                            | 5.7    |
| 12. Mt. Baker Playfield:<br>E. of Rainier Boulevard from C.Winters<br>Acreage Tract to S.line of R.Robertson's<br>Acreage Tract.                                                                              | 9.8    |

Area of Southeast Seattle, ~~South Seattle~~, Columbia  
and Rainier Beach, 6530 acres. Area of proposed parks 174.5  
acres, which is 2.66% of area to be assessed.



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As an extension of the general park and parkway scheme, we recommend the following parkways and parks.

Ballard.

North Ballard Parkway. This parkway would vary in width from 150 to 360 feet. It should be planned with due regard for economy in land takings and grading with the aid of a detailed topographical map. It is projected to go westerly from the northwest corner of Woodland Park to the brow of the hill. It would then turn and slant northwesterly down the hillside to the valley where it would gradually curve westerly and continue, with such curves as might be desirable to accommodate irregularities of the ground, about one block south of the boundary, to Ballard Bluff Park. Its maximum grade should, if possible, be limited to 4 per cent. It is hoped that a parkway can eventually be laid out by the County or by a metropolitan park commission from Ballard Bluff Park northerly, by a very winding course, because of ravines, to the new golf grounds and perhaps further.

Brighton Beach Parkway. This parkway is projected to occupy the shore of Lake Washington from Bailey Peninsula to which the Lake Washington Parkway is already designed to go, southerly to Rainier Beach. It would then turn and go westerly to Dunlap Canyon. Its width in the case of the shore portion would depend a good deal upon the attitude of owners of land through which it would pass. In the case of the inland section its width may be uniformly 200 feet and it could be improved as a formal boulevard.



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South Ridge Boulevard. This boulevard would follow in general, Pipe Line Road from City Park southerly to a point about a mile north of Dunlap Canyon. From this point southward the design should change to an informal parkway which would slant gradually down the east side of the ridge to a connection with Rainier Beach Boulevard and Dunlap Canyon. The South Ridge Boulevard would be so nearly level and would be so little interfered with by crosswise traffic that it would be the best place in Seattle for a speedway. For this purpose it should be made wide enough for a wide soft speeding drive, a wide hard macadam drive for returning to the starting point and for ordinary pleasure driving, for two wide promenades, for two traffic roads and for two sidewalks next to private property together with wide tree planting strips between each way and the next. The informal parkway would have a pleasure drive and a traffic road with a broad turf area between which would generally be on a slope from one drive to the other.

Dunlap Canyon Parkway. This parkway would run southerly through Dunlap Canyon to the open level valley of the Duwamish River. Here it would turn westerly and become a formal boulevard with a pleasure drive in the middle and a traffic road on each side. The former would cross over the railroad and the river by a bridge and continue to the County road at the foot of the steep hill west of the river.

Duwamish Hill Parkway. From the point last mentioned this parkway is proposed to continue with two roadways, one a pleasure drive and the other a traffic road, rising gradually up



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the steep hillside, winding in and out for ravines and spurs until the gently sloping edge of the plateau is reached. There would be a gradually widening parking strip or reservation between the two roads and as fully as practicable the wild woods should be preserved between the two roads. This arrangement is proposed to continue to Pigeon Point west of South Seattle and east of Youngs Cove.

South Bourne Parkway. From the point west of South Park at which Duwamish Hill Parkway reaches the east edge of the plateau, it is proposed to run a wide parkway on curving lines westerly across the plateau and then northwesterly slanting down the west hillside to the proposed park at Williams Point.

West Seattle Parkway. This parkway is designed to leave Duwamish Hill Parkway at the ravine west of the southern part of South Seattle. It would include the ravine and cross through the ridge by a cut deep enough to allow a north and south street to pass across over this parkway by a bridge. It would then turn southerly and slant down into the wooded valley. Turning rapidly across the bottom of the valley it would run northwesterly to the Boston Subdivision. It would run through this subdivision, across California Ave. and thence westerly and northerly to and down the ravine north of Alki Avenue and then, slanting southwesterly down the hillside, it would cross Hanson Ave. and end at Alki Point Park. The traffic road in this parkway will be of great importance as it would provide a commercial traffic route with a reasonably good grade down the hill



from the plateau at Alki Ave. to Hanson Ave. on the low ground near Alki Point.

Sound Bluffs Parkway. This parkway is designed to follow and preserve the steep slopes and bluffs from Williams Point northward to Schmitz Park and West Seattle Parkway west of Schmitz Park. The driveway is intended to keep just above the steepest part of the slopes and the steep slopes are to be acquired and preserved down without interfering any more than is necessary with the valuable residence properties along the shore road.

Duwamish Head Parkway, This parkway is intended mainly to preserve the steep slopes from the West Seattle Parkway at the ravine north of Alki Ave. to Duwamish Head Park and southeasterly to a point west of Youngs Cove. Thence to West Seattle Parkway in the Boston Subdivision it would have two driveways with a sloping reservation between them.

South Seattle Parkway. This parkway is intended to from the north end of City Park run westerly across the north end of the city cemetery to the crest of the bluff or steep west slope of Beacon Hill. It would then turn and run southerly down the top edge of the steep bluff to Union Depot Addition where it would turn and run northwesterly down the steep slope to the railroads, which together with the county road with its heavy traffic and electric car lines it would cross over by bridges. Continuing westerly it would run by a straight line to the Duwamish River which it would cross by a draw bridge. Upon striking the steep hillside west of the



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river it would turn and slant northwesterly to a connection in the ravine with Duwamish Hill Parkway and West Seattle Parkway. This parkway would form part of the direct pleasure driving route from Lake Washington, south of the old pumping works, by Mt. Baker Parkway, Beacon Hill Parkway and City Park to West Seattle and Alki Point.

Longfellow Park. This narrow long park or wide parkway is designed to preserve the wooded valley of Longfellow Creek south of Youngstown between Duwamish Hill and Lincoln Hill and from West Seattle Parkway to South Bourne Parkway.

Williams Point Park. This park covers Williams Point on the Sound north of Fauntleroy Cove and is intended to include enough of the comparatively level land between the point and the new electric railway to provide space for ball fields, lawns, drives and walks and border plantations. It is intended not only for a local park but as a recreation ground for the city as a whole. We have contemplated leaving space between this park and the electric railway for a row of blocks for residences, but if the land should prove upon inquiry not to be too expensive, the park should extend to the electric railway. As now outlined this park is about three quarters of a mile long and contains about 130 acres.

Magnolia Bluffs Park. This park includes the valley and a portion of Magnolia Bluffs about half a mile west of Smiths Cove. It will be bounded on the sides away from the Sound by the proposed Magnolia Bluffs Parkway or roughly speaking, by



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29th. Ave. on the East, W. McGraw St. on the North and 33rd. and 34th. Avenues on the west and contains an area of about 85 acres. Portions of the area are so gently sloping that they can be easily graded for ball fields and lawn games.

Magnolia Bluffs Parkway. This parkway is intended to follow approximately the old bicycle path and to include the bluffs or steep slopes from Plymouth St. on the west side of Smiths Cove to Fort Lawton Military Reservation. This parkway would be approached from the city by way of the bridge over the railroads at Grand Boulevard and thence by Thorndyke Ave. Eventually there will doubtless be a shorter route by a high trestle bridge considerably south of Grand Boulevard.

We recommend that a preliminary estimate of the probable cost of the land for these parkways and of the three parks described in connection with them, be made and that a city loan for approximately that amount be authorized. Then the various parks and parkways should be surveyed and detailed land and topographical maps made of them. Then the boundaries should be restudied with due regard to suitable grades for the pleasure drives, traffic roads, boundary and crossing streets. In connection with this study some adjustments could doubtless be made in conference with land owners by which the cost for land would be reduced without undue sacrifice of the park purposes to be accomplished. After the land for the several parks and parkways or sections of them has been acquired, assessments can be made on adjoining private property. With the funds thus



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acquired boundary and other drives which would be an obvious and direct benefit to abutting and neighboring property could be constructed gradually as the growth of population and wishes of land owners should indicate and when finished assessments should be levied for the benefits conferred. In many places, however, only a portion of the cost of land and construction could be equitably assessed on private lands benefited. The balance of the cost would remain a charge on the general park funds. While the required lands should be secured without unreasonable delay, especially where subdivisions are being recorded and lots are being sold and built upon, actual construction may proceed much more slowly so that the financial burden for construction and maintenance shall not cause an undue increase in taxation.

Yours respectfully,

*Oliver Brothers*  
*Landscape Architects*